

## WORTH ONE DOLLAR

Fascinating Myth Connected  
With the Coin of 1804.

## DECLARED TO BE A FAKE

Government Never Issued Such a Coin.  
Other Instances of Curious Fraud.  
Practiced Upon Collectors.

A specially dressed young fellow, with an air of badly expressed excitement, walked into a second-hand book store and curio shop on Marietta street Thursday night and laid a silver dollar on the show case.

"What is that worth?" he said to the proprietor.

The man behind the counter examined the coin with an imperturbable countenance.

"One dollar," he replied.

"But, man, almost everyone knows that," said the visitor, "don't you see the date?"

"Certainly, it's 1804."

The visitor fumbled in his pocket and produced a pamphlet. "Read that," he said, opening it and putting his finger on a certain page. The paragraph he indicated ran as follows:

"The dollar of 1804, the 'diamond dollar,' as it is familiarly termed, is the rarest of all American coins. A very limited number were struck from the dies, and only four are known to be in existence. One is owned by the British museum, one by Mr. E. L. Carpenter, a collector of Boston; one by the Illinois Historical society, and one by Mr. V. Herbert of Roanoke, Va. The last one sold was bid in for \$1,500."

The dealer read this deliberately and assumed a tired expression.

"That is pure hush," he said. "In the first place there is no such thing as an 1804 dollar. I mean a genuine one. Of course there are plenty of dollars with 1804 on them, but it was not put there by the mint. If Mr. Herbert of Roanoke or anybody else ever paid \$1,500 for such a coin, they were done to the tune of exactly \$1,499. There are eight 1804 dollars right here in Atlanta besides this one. Two are in Mr. Abe Fry's safe, Mr. Ed Brown has four and Mr. Williams two. I would bet that there are at least 50 of them in the state of Georgia. Some of the owners know that they are fakes, and some fondly believe that they have a treasure."

"And you say that the government never coined them?" gasped the visitor.

"I do. I made special inquiry at the United States treasury department at Washington and was informed that no dollars were issued that year. In the collection of coins there, which is of course complete, there is no 1804 dollar. I know that the myth is widespread, but it is a myth all the same. It was started by unscrupulous dealers, and there is a regular factory in New York for running off these dollars. They simply change the date on an 1807 or an 1809 dollar, both of which are comparatively common. They are then sold by private agents. If they were posted in the catalogues for public sale, the fraud would be quickly denounced, but they are worked off on collectors who think they are getting a snipe."

The young man sighed and put his dollar in his pocket. "There must be a good deal of fraud of that kind practiced," he said.

"Yes," replied the dealer, "there is. Take for instance the Greenview (Ala.) 5 cent Confederate stamp. No such stamp was ever issued, yet you can buy them by the hundred. They bring all the way from \$1 to \$25. The \$1,000 Confederate bill is another example. There were exactly seven of these printed, and the plate was then destroyed. It's a long story, but that is the gist of it. One is in the British museum, one in the Astor library at New York and the others are owned by individuals throughout the country, a specimen, by the way, being here in Atlanta. Now, I have had dozens of these bills offered me for sale. There are thousands in collections over the world, all spurious, every one of them. In fact, the fraud practiced in that line would fill a volume."

After the young man went out considerably crestfallen, a reporter, who had overheard the conversation, asked whether there were really many American coins that brought very fancy prices.

"Yes," said the dealer. "Quite a number. There is the 1853 quarter without the arrowheads and rays. The quarter with both of these devices on it is common, but without them it is exceedingly scarce and worth several hundred dollars. A very rare coin is the 1803 half penny, but recently several thousand of them were found in Ohio, and the price has dropped to next to nothing."

"Most people," he continued, "labor under the impression that a coin is valuable simply because it is old. Consequently they will hoard up old pennies, nickels and silver pieces that are really only worth their face value. The premium on a coin is not fixed by its age, but by its scarcity. How do coins become scarce? Heaven only knows! It is a great mystery. There are instances of coins of about equal value on two consecutive years where specimens from one are as plentiful as blackberries and the other as scarce as hen's teeth. Nobody can explain it—we simply know that it is so. The mysterious disappearance of people which we occasionally read about is not half the enigma that this disappearance of money is. It vanishes from circulation, melts apparently into thin air, and all the fancy prices and big premiums of collectors never succeed in bringing it to life again."—Atlanta Constitution.

**Anticoincidence.**

It is hardly odd over the line of Alaska on the edge of the Rocky mountains. Last winter the thermometer was for a week at a time down to 60 degrees, and I have seen it go even considerably lower. At 80 in the winter, not during other winters that I have been there, was it higher than 60 degrees. This is extraordinary. We lived in a solid log house, a good warm one, but many a time I have awakened in the night and found the blankets, which were kept up well under the nose, frozen like a cake of ice. Sometimes the intense cold makes the blankets for a long time frozen.

Made and everything frozen, and you would think that where there was no thinking. The worst experience was trying to make bread. The yeast would freeze in such of way, sometimes even

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Three days later the alarm was sent out that Lizzie Williams was mysteriously missing. She had not returned home, nor could it be found that she had called at any farmhouse for a distance of five miles either way. After a day's search without trace of her the peddler was overhauled and placed under arrest. His story was a truthful one and easily verified. The pair were seen by no less than four different people as they drove up to Endicott's, but no one saw Lizzie Williams after that. As she was gone when the peddler came out with Mrs. Endicott, there could be no case against him, no matter what her fate. Day after day the search went on, until every foot of ground for miles around had been inspected. Then it extended to the towns. The river was dragged and the case given to the detectives.

Something ought to have been discovered, but the case stands today as it did then. A dozen or more "suspects" were arrested and discharged, and seven or eight different officials secured "clews," which promised much, but amounted to nothing. Not a glove, ribbon or other relic was found which could be brought against the couple, but yet two-thirds of the community believed them guilty. The missing man was advertised for, a reward offered, and detectives to take up his trail, and there was no let up in the search for two years. Three or four men continued it a year longer. It seemed impossible that the man could have gone a distance of 20 miles without being recognized, and as in the case of Hopkins no reason could be found why he should exile himself.

Ten years later a dog solved the mystery. In crossing the creek a mile or so from Nelson's house the professor stepped into a bed of quicksand and was held fast. He probably shouted for aid, but his cries were not heard. He sank feet first, and when the treacherous sands closed over his head there was no trace of his grave. Eight or nine years later a great freshet changed the course of the creek by many rods. Later still, as the farmer was plowing up the bed of the creek, his dog scented the skeleton and uncovered the skull. Help was summoned and the bones removed, and enough clothing was left to identify the dead man to everybody's satisfaction. He had met a terrible death, but no one was guilty of shedding his blood.

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One day in June, 1897, he called at the bank and deposited \$5,000 which had just been paid to the firm. He had a private account of over \$10,000 in the same bank. He had a car worth \$1,000, had never had a quarrel with anybody, and his health was excellent. He left the bank at 3 o'clock with a smile on his

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It is now a quarter of a century since the strange disappearance of Lizzie Williams, and yet the case is as much of a mystery as it was when 200 people were